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17 September 1980

NOTE FOR: Dick Lehman

SUBJECT : Seminar on Policy Issues Between the US and Western Europe  
in the 1980s

1. In the interest of making clearer my strong feelings about the difficulties that developed with OPA in the last few days over this seminar, let me note at the outset that:

-- your memorandum of 26 March charges the NIOs with responsibility for conducting two seminars a year, and among other things, "making the necessary security, administrative, local, and travel arrangements;"

-- in my memo of 25 June, I suggested that, having already had a useful mini-seminar on Italy, it would be most useful to devote the second one to direct support of the remaining assessments on our program, particularly the estimate on policy issues in the 1980s; and finally,

-- even though it is not so stated in your memo, I have no trouble with the view that NIC seminars should, to the extent possible, be to the benefit of NFAC as a whole, provided this does not detract from their other purposes and there is some reasonable regard for orderly procedures.

2. Since it is in direct support of an estimate -- and one of the more important and difficult ones that has been undertaken -- the seminar now set for 18 September does have a special purpose. That purpose dictated the desirability and indeed the necessity of having community-wide attendance and of selecting the NFAC participants from among those who would be making some input to the estimate. In proceeding with the project, we purposely drafted the terms of reference so that it would also serve as an attractive agenda for outside participants in the seminar, and we took quite seriously your injunction that we should try to bring in the "finest minds" available. I think we have achieved that -- by the thought that we put into the TOR/Agenda, by the emphasis we put on the interest and importance of the project, and by stressing (over-stressing, I now fear) the NIC's direct lineage from the old Board of National Estimates.

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[redacted] Well over six weeks of work went into the making of these arrangements, including dozens of phone calls and a great deal of correspondence -- some of which will have been received by the invitees only within the last few days.

3. Given the caution, care, and effort that we have devoted to this exercise, I do not think it surprising that we should be startled to find out late in the afternoon last Friday that it was the intention of an analyst in OPA to begin calling up the outside participants to invite them to prolong their stay for some other kind of session. To be sure, it was subsequently said that she "knows" all the guests she intended to call. Nonetheless, if this is to be considered an acceptable way to approach the great difficulties of putting these seminars together, I think we run some serious risks:

-- of making it impossible for the NIOs to carry out the management responsibilities that your memo sets forth;

-- of creating a situation in which any NIO who invites an outside guest to the Agency must be concerned that sharing the information with OPA (even by way of inviting OPA to participate in meetings with that person) could expose the guest to separate and uncoordinated approaches by OPA (indeed must fear that such interventions would actually be encouraged);

-- of confusing invitees who, if approached by various offices with uncoordinated "by the way" kinds of propositions, are going to wonder why CIA can't get its act together;

-- of turning off those academics who, while willing occasionally to participate in special purpose seminars of the kind we are running, will be quick to resent any implication that they have thereby agreed to a regular association with CIA and even suspect that the seminars are vehicles for recruiting them.

4. These risks are certain to be compounded if last-minute interventions are going to occur in the extraordinary way that this one did. I am told [redacted] that the idea of approaching our invited consultants came from Helene Boatner after [redacted] had voiced regret that we had made only two seats available to her division. (Since we have also invited an analyst from II Division, OPA has the largest representation of any of the offices. I would also recall to you that WE has regularly discouraged this NIE being undertaken at all -- on the grounds that it might require of the Division too much time, "creative energy", and attendance at "interminable interagency meetings".) But neither Helene nor [redacted] bothered to check out with me ahead of time whether such an approach would cause us any difficulties, and the first inkling we had of it was the call from the analyst

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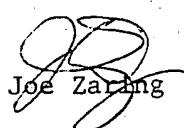
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who, finding neither me nor my assistant available, simply asked my secretary for the telephone number of one of the invitees and who among them would be staying overnight.

STAT 5. Since that call, I have had several phone conversations with both [ ] and Helene in which I tried to make the points put forth above -- evidently with no success. On Friday evening, Helene told me that it was "obvious" no one would be making any calls at that late an hour, but that she intended to return to the matter on Monday and go over with me the list of consultants to find out who might be either too "confused by" or "sensitive to" another approach. She did call Monday morning, saying that one local consultant had in fact already been called, and when I restated my objections, adding that she felt she had "complete authority" to go ahead with the others.

6. To sum up, I think this is a shabby way of conducting our business. Either the NIOs are in charge of making the arrangements leading up to the seminars they are responsible for organizing, or they are not responsible if matters go awry. Either responsible officers show judgment -- not to mention sensitivity -- in their dealings with each other or the organization becomes a greater obstacle to getting the work done than it already is. Having devoted half my life to this business, I shall -- on the advice of my better half -- carry on until my intended retirement in January. But it would certainly be easier if something could be done to minimize this kind of disagreeable and unnecessary horseplay.

  
Joe Zaring

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